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s he so often tells us, paradoxical in nature, and since his *credo* is fundamentally a *credo quia impossibile*, it is difficult to attack its logic. And yet it is just here that one may find chief reason for disagreement, since, upon a confessedly illogical basis, he builds a scheme which grows more and more logical, until he is forced—according to a passage in his *Orthodoxy*—into a belief in fairies. The force of such a *reductio ad absurdum* apparently never troubles Mr. Chesterton. His fight for belief is so brilliantly offensive that he has no time for the more prosaic work of defence. With his true British courage he never knows when he is beaten. And herein lies his strength and weakness.

L. WARDLAW MILES.

BOCCACCIO. A Biographical Study, with Photogravure Frontispiece and numerous other Illustrations. By Edward Hutton. New York: The John Lane Co. 1910.

Few writers of to-day are as well equipped as Mr. Hutton for undertaking a literary work such as he has given us. He has essayed and admirably achieved an exhaustive biography. His many previous books on Italian history, literature, and art have given him the necessary background across which to throw in luminous relief this most lovable scholar-poet, unquestionably the most human of Italy's three world-poets, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; to the first of whom he was to stand as world-sponsor, and to the second in some such relation as Goethe to Schiller.

Mr. Hutton has written his book for the general reader as well as for the scholar, and hence the body of the text is comparatively free from any discussion of the minor debatable points that must perforce grow up around a man like Boccaccio. Discussion is more or less studiously restricted to a very free and full use of the footnote. Larger and more vital questions, like Boccaccio's parentage and place of birth, his first residence in Naples and his real relation to Fiammetta, her death, as well as that of his father, and the consequent change in Boccaccio's life and creative activity, are fully discussed in a vivid narrative style. Mr. Hutton's conclusions are, in the main, in accord with accepted criticism; where he differs, he stands squarely by

the writings of Boccaccio, rejecting such statements that are, he says, "asserted with the air of a mediæval Pope speaking *ex cathedra*, no sort of evidence in support of the assertion being vouchsafed" (p. 130).

Boccaccio is known to English readers chiefly through one work, the importance of whose masterful prose is sometimes overlooked, as well as the hint, "*andere Zeiten, andere Sitten*," forgotten by them. With intent, it seems, Mr. Hutton has confined the chapter on the *Decameron* to a few pages, adding a synopsis of it in the valuable appendices. Certainly, Boccaccio as a man and in relation to the social and literary history of his time, gains immeasurably in this book over any previous treatment; for, while Mr. Hutton's presentment is biographical, with Boccaccio's attitude towards women as the running thread, in his statement of Boccaccio's position with respect to the Italian Renaissance innovations in the field of letters, he has given us several most readable chapters after the method of comparative literature.

G. L. SWIGGETT.

THE SOUTH IN THE BUILDING OF THE NATION. Complete in ten volumes. Richmond, Virginia: The Southern Historical Society.

In the introduction to volume X, Professor S. C. Mitchell, one of the editors-in-chief, gives the spirit animating the whole work and the point of view from which it was undertaken. The treatment is not sectional in the narrow sense, nor is "localism here at variance with nationalism." "Southern issues are viewed in the light of national destiny." The whole work falls into eight divisions: Histories of the Separate States, The Political History, The Economic History, The Literary and Intellectual Life, Fiction, Oratory, The Social Life, Biography. Thus almost every possible phase of Southern life, past and present, is included and discussed in detail by Southern scholars, educators, and statesmen. The work is, therefore, both comprehensive and representative. It is to be regretted, however, that the set should appear in incomplete form, with volumes V and VI yet to follow. In a subsequent issue of THE REVIEW will be given fuller and more adequate estimate of this important work.